

Application No. 10/647,118
Reply dated October 6, 2004
Response to Office Action dated August 10, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Allowed and allowable claims

Applicant appreciates that the Examiner has indicated claims 3 and 7 would be allowable if they are rewritten to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1, 2, and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Zlotos (U.S. Patent 6,588,988) in view of Aalst (U.S. Patent 4,659,262) or Shiers (U.S. Patent 4,718,796). Claims 1, 2, and 4-6 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Zlotos in view of Duckham, which does not appear to be a reference of record. For the following reasons, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is patentable over the cited references because at least one limitation of claim 1 is not taught or suggested by the references. For example, claim 1 recites an air pressure sensor that is disposed in a suction line that connects the negative pressure source with the handling devices. In the Zlotos patent, on the other hand, a pressure sensor (7, 7') is placed upstream of the material vessel (6) or downstream of the vacuum source (5), but not between the material vessel (6) and the vacuum source (5). Accordingly, this limitation of claim 1 is not taught or suggested by the Zlotos patent.

In light of the foregoing remarks, this application is considered to be in condition for allowance, and early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the

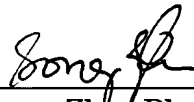
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application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #037149.52655US).

Respectfully submitted,

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Song Zhu, Ph.D.
Registration No. 44,420
J. D. Evans
Registration No. 26,269

CROWELL & MORING LLP
Intellectual Property Group
P.O. Box 14300
Washington, DC 20044-4300
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844
JDE:SZ:tlm (341470)